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Daily Highlights

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FRIDAY HIGHLIGHTS

+ Security Council President expresses grave concern at continued fighting around Bihac; Serb aircraft attack safe area with napalm and cluster bombs, despite call for end to all hostile actions.

+ Security Council calls on Angolan President to ensure strict adherence to truce established with UNITA; urges signing of Lusaka Protocol on Sunday as agreed.

+ Secretary-General to visit Italy, Morocco and Algeria next week; will address United Nations Conference on Organized Transnational Crime in Naples.

+ Denmark offers 5,000 troops for United Nations stand-by arrangements for peace-keeping; encourages other countries to do likewise.

+ African development is single greatest challenge facing international community, Secretary-General says as General Assembly marks Africa Industrialization Day.

+ Georgian/Abkhaz talks end without agreement on return of refugees; Special Envoy Brunner notes some progress on question of overall political settlement.

+ UNHCR says humanitarian action in conflict situations must remain independent of United Nations-authorized political and military activities.

+ CNN to provide in-depth coverage of events commemorating United Nations fiftieth anniversary, Under-Secretary-General Sorensen tells Preparatory Committee for year.

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The Security Council has expressed grave concern at the situation in the Bihac area, and the failure of the parties to respond to its Presidential statement of 13 November. In remarks to correspondents yesterday, Council President Madeleine Albright (United States) reiterated the call in that

statement for an end to all hostile actions in the Bihac area. She also noted reports of cross-border firing by "the so-called Krajina Serbs", and called on them to desist immediately.

The Council President expressed concern at the threat posed by the hostilities to the safety of United Nations Protection Force (UNPROFOR) personnel, and at the restrictions imposed by the Krajina Serbs on their freedom of movement and supply. She also noted that UNPROFOR had warned that North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) air support might be called in, and expressed appreciation for the Croatian Government's restraint in the crisis.

The United Nations Protection Force (UNPROFOR) today said that two aircraft had attacked the Bihac safe area, and that two aircraft had been observed taking off from an airfield in nearby Serb-held Croatia at around the same time. However, the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) did not confirm that they had crossed the international border. Two impacts were reported not far from the headquarters of the Bosnian Army's Fifth Corps, and fragments of napalm and cluster bombs were found at the scene, according to a United Nations spokesman. Meanwhile, there was heavy fighting around the town of Velika Kladusa, with continuing cross-border firing.

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The Security Council today expressed concern at allegations that the truce agreed to by the Government of Angola and the National Union for the Total Independence of Angola (UNITA) was not being respected. In a message issued by its President Madeleine Albright (United States), the Council called on Angolan President José Eduardo Dos Santos to ensure that his forces adhered strictly to the terms of the truce.

The Council urged President Dos Santos, as it was urging UNITA's Jonas Savimbi, to sign the Lusaka Protocol on Sunday, as had been agreed. It stressed that the signing of the Protocol and the prompt establishment of a cease-fire constituted "an essential condition for an expanded United Nations presence in Angola."

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Secretary-General Boutros Boutros-Ghali will leave New York this weekend for Naples, where he will address the United Nations Conference on Organized Transnational Crime. The Conference, which will take place from 21 to 23 November, will examine the dangers posed by transnational crime in all regions and forge a new global strategy for prevention and control. It will be attended by Ministers of Justice and the Interior from all over the world.

The Secretary-General will then travel to Rome, where he will confer with the Prime Minister and other senior Government officials, and address the Italian Senate. He will later visit Morocco and Algeria for talks on Western Sahara, and will attend a meeting hosted by the Moroccan Government on the fiftieth anniversary of the United Nations.

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Denmark will make around 5,000 troops available for United Nations stand-by peace-keeping arrangements, according to a spokesman for the Organization. He made that announcement after a meeting between the Danish Defence Minister, Hans Haekkerup, and the Under-Secretary-General for Peace-keeping Operations, Kofi Annan.

In remarks to correspondents, Mr. Haekkerup noted that while the United Nations had no standing army, it could use stand-by forces for preventive or early deployments, before atrocities were committed. He suggested that other countries with long peace-keeping traditions match Denmark's contribution.

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African development is perhaps the single greatest challenge facing the international community, the Secretary-General told the General Assembly today. He said international support was vital to Africa's efforts to achieve stability, social progress, and the eradication of hunger and disease. He made those comments in a message for Africa Industrialization Day, 20 November, delivered on his behalf by Rosario Green, Assistant Secretary-General for Political Affairs.

The New Agenda for the Development of Africa in the 1990s provided the framework within which the United Nations would support economic and social progress in Africa, the Secretary-General continued. He assured African countries of his full support for their industrialization, adding that the mobilization of the United Nations system in support of development was a special priority for him.

In his message for the Day, Assembly President Amara Essy (Côte d'Ivoire) said there was a tendency to equate Africa with poverty, hunger, disease and civil strife. However, the continent was rich in natural and human resources, and industrialization was the key to the major problems confronting it. For industry to thrive and grow, the competitiveness, innovation and entrepreneurial spirit of the private sector must be allowed to flourish. Africa's governments should support entrepreneurs by creating an environment conducive to sustainable industrial development, he concluded.

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Talks between the Georgian and Abkhaz parties in Geneva ended today without any agreement on the voluntary return of refugees and displaced persons. However, Special Envoy Edouard Brunner, who chaired the talks, reported that progress had been achieved on the question of an overall political settlement. He said the parties had agreed to consider a text prepared by him as an acceptable basis for negotiations.

The Secretary-General will now evaluate the results of the talks to determine if he should convene and chair further talks in Geneva beginning on 2 December, according to a United Nations spokesman.

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Humanitarian action in conflict situations must remain independent of United Nations-authorized political and military activities, according to the Director of the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) at Headquarters, Soren Jessen-Petersen. However, he said that to be effective, humanitarian action must be related to a comprehensive strategy for peace, security, human rights and economic and social development. He made those comments to the Fourth Committee (Special Political and Decolonization) as it continued its review of peace-keeping operations.

Mr. Jessen-Petersen cautioned against the use of force under Chapter VII of the United Nations Charter in connection with humanitarian activities. In Bosnia and Herzegovina, force had never been used to obtain access, he said. Instead, considerable effort had gone into negotiating access, with military escorts adding a deterrent value. Citing the situation in Somalia, on the other hand, he said the use of force against one party inevitably affected the perceived impartiality and neutrality of the Organization and its humanitarian bodies. In such circumstances, those bodies might have to distance themselves from United Nations military operations.

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Cable News Network will give in-depth and on-the-spot coverage of events commemorating the fiftieth anniversary of the United Nations, according to Under-Secretary-General Gillian Sorensen, Special Adviser to the Secretary-General for Public Policy. She told the Preparatory Committee for the Fiftieth Anniversary of the United Nations that such coverage was the kind "we have always dreamed about".

Updating the Committee on preparations for the anniversary, she said a new "UN50" information kit had been sent to delegations. Her staff was producing public service announcements for video, radio and print, which would be out early in 1995, while there had been many meetings with representatives of countries, non-governmental organizations, regional commissions and United Nations agencies. The actual United Nations Charter would be on public view at Headquarters at the start of 1995, she added.

Also yesterday, the Preparatory Committee discussed matters relating to the declaration being drafted for the anniversary. Cuba said the text submitted by the Non-Aligned Movement should be one of the bases for development of the draft. However, the United States favoured a shorter text with inspirational language which would be understood by everyone, not a text of five or six pages that would contain every theme of concern to various countries. Ukraine said the final text must be based on compromise and must reaffirm Charter principles.

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